



December 2025

Dear CWR/PTM Friend and Partner,

God with us! God with us in disguise, for who would ever imagine God showing up in such humble dependence? A baby. They called him Jesus. The very idea that God, in the person of Jesus, became a baby **unhinges us!**

William Lawrence Bragg was an Australian-born (1890) British physicist who at twenty-five became the youngest person ever to win the Nobel Prize in physics (in 1915 he won the prize jointly, with his father, William Henry Bragg). Later in life, after being knighted (1941) and becoming Sir William Lawrence Bragg, he and his family moved to London.

As an avid gardener, Sir William Lawrence Bragg was unhappy in London as the residence he could afford did not allow him space and property to tend and nurture a garden. He came up with an ingenious solution. He dressed in old gardening clothes, appearing like someone who made his living from being a gardener, and then walked around a wealthy London neighborhood where properties included enough space for expansive gardens.

Having identified one home whose garden seemed to be in need of care, he knocked at the front door, introduced himself to the owner as “Willie” (true enough, his first name was William) and explained he was looking for part time employment as a gardener one afternoon a week. He was hired, and the owner of the home was delighted with his care for her garden.

One day the lady of the house invited a friend for lunch, and it happened that day was when “Willie” was working in the garden. The guest was an avid student and follower of science at large and physics in particular, and immediately recognized the true identity of “Willie.” The guest said to the lady of the house, “**Good heavens**, what is Sir William Lawrence Bragg doing working in your garden?”

Good heavens indeed! **Good heavens**, what was God doing in that stable, as a baby in a manger?” Mary asked a similar question after Jesus was resurrected. *What was God in the flesh doing walking around in a cemetery? He was supposed to be dead.* When she saw Jesus near the tomb he was supposed to be occupying, she assumed he was a gardener (John 20:15). She had discovered his empty tomb and was now looking for the dead body of Jesus, assuming it had been stolen.

Jesus unhinged Mary because she was looking for a dead body, certainly not expecting a resurrected one! That’s Christmas in a nutshell. **Christmas unhinges us.** The staggering reality—the monumental awesome truth of Christmas—knocks our socks off. What in the world was going on? God comes to us in the flesh and he arrives as a baby —not as a full grown adult— but a baby!?!

- And what, he came to serve, not to be served?
- And what, he came to die, not to prolong his life as long as he could?
- And what, he came to overturn the tables of religion, rather than to support the existing status quo religion or start another one?

Jesus, the Son of God, the God-man, completely disarmed people by failing to meet their expectations of who he, the Messiah, ought to be, what he should teach, how he should act, what he should do, etc. **Jesus unhinged people then, and he still unhinges us now!**

Baby Jesus was just the beginning of upsetting the apple cart of human expectations. He offered us, from the very beginning of his earthly life, until the end, his Cross, the grace and love of God in the most vulnerable way possible. As the hymn says so eloquently, “What Child Is This?”

Several decades ago I read an excerpt of a letter author John Steinbeck sent to his good friend Adlai Stevenson (the distinguished diplomat and politician). This was 1959, when people still wrote actual letters rather than short cell phone texts. Steinbeck was frustrated with Christmas, and described two Christmases to his friend Stevenson:

“There is one kind [of Christmas] in a house where there is little and a present represents not only love but sacrifice. The one single package is opened with a kind of slow wonder, almost reverence. Then there is the other kind of Christmas with presents piled high, the gifts of guilty parents as bribes because they have nothing else to give. The wrappings are ripped off and the presents thrown down, and at the end, the child says, ‘Is that all?’”

Then Steinbeck compares the America of 1959 to the second Christmas:

“A strange species we are. We can stand anything God and nature can throw at us save only plenty. If I wanted to destroy a nation, I would give it too much and would have it on its knees, miserable, greedy, sick.”

One can only wonder how much more withering Steinbeck’s assessment of the spiritual condition of the North America of 2025 might be!

An indulgent non-Christlike Christmas is celebrated by many today as an experience wherein sanctification and salvation is thought to be achieved and measured by materialism. This corrupted Christmas is a never-satisfied rapacious monster, always demanding more and bigger and better gifts, a humanly impossible goal (akin to the futile attempt to earn one’s salvation, love and acceptance by God via one’s efforts and works).

This corrupt and non-Christlike Christmas is perceived as a yellow-brick-road Wizard of Oz fantasy trip, during which one momentarily escapes from the real world, only to inevitably face the ultimate reality of another frantic failure to secure love and acceptance, accompanied by hangovers caused by consuming too much food and imbibing too much alcohol.

A Christ-centered Christmas is founded in the Incarnation—in which God became human, starting his human life in Mary’s womb, then as a helpless, newborn baby, finally to pour out his self-sacrificial love on his Cross.

Christmas is all about physical life AND death, most importantly pointing the way to *the profound paradox that new spiritual life follows the death of the physical dimension, along with its cares, limitations, worries and woes.*

A Christ-centered Christmas is about the Light of the world appearing to those (that would be you and me and all humanity, past, present and future) who live in darkness. “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned” (Isaiah 9:2).

The reality of a Christ-centered Christmas is about an infant arriving who was marked for death. The people to whom Jesus came (both then, and by extension, all humanity of all time)

rejected him. *“He was in the world, and though the world was made by him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him”* (John 1:10-11).

The world at large, then and now, the religious world specifically and the people group to which he came did not want a powerless baby who would one day die on a Cross. They (we) wanted a conquering King—they wanted Superman, Thor or Captain Marvel ... they wanted solutions.

They then had enough death... so have we. We want escape, deliverance and salvation, but like the world of Jesus, and ironically, while Jesus offered them (and us) that very thing, it was then rejected (and in the main still is), because his way did not conform to their (and our) way.

A Christ-centered Christmas truly unhinges us.

In *Finding Hope Again*, Roy Fairchild recounts a story of traveling in Europe in his younger days, when he became ill in a small Austrian village. Hoping to reunite with his traveling party (pre-cell phone days), after exhausting his money on medical bills, he returned to Vienna where his friends had gone. He had spent his last cent getting to Vienna and now he could not find his friends. It was mid-day, he was standing by a street car station, depressed, tired and hungry.

A “little old” lady, who seemed to be making a living by hard-scrabble, yet joyful, work of sweeping and cleaning city stations like the one in which Roy was standing, walked over to him asking if he was hungry. Before he could answer, she opened her “brown bag” lunch and offered Roy half of it. In his book Roy says they shared her lunch and talked for about an hour.

This lady who turned out to serve Roy in Jesus’ name (Matthew 25:34-40) told him her story—she had lost her husband and two sons, with only her daughter still alive, but in spite of the hard times she was enduring and her necessary hard work, she insisted she was thankful for so much.

When Roy asked her why she was so thankful and why she had offered him half her lunch, she said, *“Jesu ist mein Herr. Gott ist gut.”* **Jesus is my Lord. God is good.**

My friends, God is indeed good. He is God with us. **He is Jesus who unhinges us**, always challenging our religious assumption. He is Jesus who comes to serve us, rather than for us to serve him. He is Jesus, and our best response to his grace, love and mercy is to serve others in his name. **Indeed, Jesus is our Lord and God is good!**

A wonderful, merry, Christ-centered season of Christmas to you and yours!



Greg Albrecht

President, Plain Truth Ministries

CWR/PTM Prayer List—December 2025

These requests for prayer represent just a few of the thousands we receive and pray for. We invite you to join us in praying for these and the others that space does not permit us to include here. Thanks for joining with us as a CWR/PTM Prayer Partner.

Please pray for my sister. She is 85 years old and suffers with swelling in her legs and she's struggling with a lot of pain.—Virginia

Please remember me in your prayers. I am going through some serious health trials and pain. I am continuing to keep everyone on the prayer list in my prayers.—Tennessee

Please pray for our family. We are grieving the loss of our dad, a patriarch who lived a long and blessed life, reaching the age of 94.—Illinois

Please pray for us to continue to be able to receive the good news you share. We are starting to have some restrictions that make it hard to share the gospel.—Puerto Rico

Thanks for your prayers for my health. I am doing better but please continue to keep me in your prayers.—Georgia

Please pray for all those who lost loved ones in the recent floods in Texas and in natural disasters in other areas of the world.—Oregon

Please pray for my sister. She was recently diagnosed with an aggressive form of lung cancer and she is now undergoing chemotherapy.—North Carolina

Please pray for an end to the wars in Ukraine and Gaza. Pray for the people who are starving and suffering due to these wars.—Maine

Please continue to keep my mother in your prayers as she suffers with diabetes and dementia. Please also keep me in your prayers for my physical and spiritual health.—Utah

Thanks for your prayers for my health concerns—I am going into hospice. Please continue to keep me in your prayers and pray for my daughter's stress and various health troubles.—Texas

Please keep me in your prayers. I fell and broke my hip and I'm struggling with some serious health issues. I will soon be 85 years old and moving into assisted living.—Arizona

Please pray for my granddaughter who is having liver problems. I pray for this wonderful ministry. Thanks to everyone at PTM. You help feed us the love of God every month.—Louisiana

I am suffering with a broken jaw and failing vision. Please keep me in your prayers. Thank you for your prayers and your love.—South Carolina

Please pray for my complete recovery from a stomach hernia surgery. Thanks in advance to everyone for your prayers.—Kentucky

I am thankful to be part of the PTM team. I pray for God to give you strength to continue to do his work, and that he will bless and protect each one of you.—Alabama

I thank my God for everyone at PTM and I pray for you always. May God continue to bless everyone involved with this wonderful ministry.—Virginia

Our Father in Heaven: We thank you for your grace, mercy and love. You love each of these individuals, and we thank you in advance for the answers you will provide for each request. With thanksgiving for our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, our suffering servant who heals us, in whose name we pray—Amen.